

## Facing Up Series 05: Following Leads

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Summary: If Maggie thought PJ would just walk away and forget she was very mistaken

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Following Leads

By Jaye Reid

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Authors notes: This is an "add in" to my series. It wasn't originally planned, but after popular demand and request, I wrote it.

There may be more "add ins" from time to time, it will depend on where life's journey is taking Maggie as to whether they are required.

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The phone was ringingâ€¦.. and ringingâ€¦.. and ringingâ€¦. Maybe she wasn't home. P.J. was about to hang up, when he finally heard her voice. It was so formal.

He smiled.

"Hello, Kayla Darcy speaking?"

"Hello Kayla"

"Oh, hello you," she replied, "how's it going?"

"Fineâ€¦. you?" he asked.

"Yeah, yeah, of courseâ€¦.. I'm fine" Kayla answered.

"Have you been busy?" P.J. queried.

"Well of course, I'm always busy. You know what Mt. Thomas is like. Full of wayward troubled criminally minded teenagers," she laughed.

"Don't you get into any trouble then" he warned.

"No that won't happen. Remember I was one of \*them\* once."

"Well that is exactly what I mean!" he joked. He liked stirring her up.

"Hey! pull your head in!" she retorted.

"Ha! Temper, temper."

So, to what do I owe this pleasure?" she asked.

"Just called to say hello, see how things were going" he replied.

"Oh really?" she questioned, not really believing him.

"Yeah" was his response.

"Well no, I am fine. I actually have company at the moment."

"Oh? Who's your visitor tonight then? Do you want me to run a check on them?" This question usually got a reaction out of her too.

"No you don't need to run a check on them. The company is female and we are talking shop. How about I ring you back tomorrow?" she replied. "Okay if you want to." He said disappointed.

"Yeah what time do you knock off work tomorrow?" she queried.

He stopped and thought, "Ah, tomorrow I am going to the club after work."

"Well okay thenâ€¦â€¦ what time will you leave the club?"

"I should be home about eight thirty ish." P.J. replied.

"So around nine? It won't be past your bedtime?" she asked

"Oh, very funny. I'm not \*\*\*\*\*that\* bloody old just yet. Anyway all \*good\* girls shouldn't be up too late either." He joked back.

"Yeah, yeah, you're funny too," Kayla laughed.

"We're both comedians then."

"Okay, I will catch you then," said Kayla wanting to get off the phone.

"No problem, goodnight then."

"Bye!" she said.

He hung up the phone. He felt slightly guilty. Until now, he had only phoned her once a month or so. But he had already phoned her twice in two weeks. But she was busy, and had company. He had finally found the courage to ask her, to quiz her, on the new Snr. Sgt. in Mt. Thomas. But Kayla was busy. So he would have to wait until she called him back tomorrow night. He told himself, as he packed up his desk, that he could wait another day. What was another day?

He grabbed his jacket from the back of his chair and swung it over his shoulder as he switched the office light off on his way out.

He glanced at his watch as he walked down the hall. It was almost seven p.m. Damn, he was going to be late again. They had dinner together every second Tuesday night. Had for several years. He had wondered if they should change the time one day. P.J. was always late. And always getting chastised for it. It had almost become a game.

P.J. wandered out the front door of the Station. It was cold, he put his jacket on. The Pub was only a few blocks down the street. If he hurried he wouldn't be too late.

He looked around after he had walked through the front door of the pub, and he was surprised. One of the few times he had arrived first!

The pub was noisy. He stood at the bar and ordered himself a beer. He nodded to a few people from work. It *\*was\** the nearest pub to the Station. He felt a hand on his shoulder and turned around.

"G'day P.J., fancy ME being late. Makes a change doesn't it."

P.J. smiled, "Have to mark it down on the calendar won't I," he said, "so, how has your day been Pat?"

"Alright I suppose," Pat Doyle replied.

"You want your usual?" P.J. asked as the barperson put his beer in front of him.

Pat nodded.

"And could I have an orange juice too please," P.J. said.

"You ordered food yet?" asked Pat.

"Nah mate, thought I would wait until you got here."

"Well I'm here and I'm hungry," Pat replied. They got their drinks and headed for the lounge to the menu board.

"I think I will have the roast," said Pat, "I miss my weekly roast dinner with Maggieâ€|â€|â€| now that she is gone."

"How's she going?" asked P.J. as casually as he could.

"Okay I think. She rang me last week. Sounded like \*our\* Maggie, keeping too busy. She mentioned that there was a young copper still up there. Now what was his nameâ€¦.. Mawson?â€¦.. Dawson?â€¦.."

"Lawson," said P.J., " Jack Lawson."

"Yeah, that's him," replied Pat. "At least she's got a familiar face up there."

"Jack's a nice bloke, good country cop," said P.J. "I actually ran into the Detective that is posted at Mt. Thomas." Continued P.J., "He took over from me. Apparently he and Maggie have already had words."

"Well," said Pat with a smirk, "wouldn't be Maggie if she wasn't having words with a Detective, now would it?"

P.J. grinned, "No, I guess not."

The two men ordered their meals and then found a table to sit at. They sat there, talking as they had done for all these years. The subject changed from Maggie, as it always did, when one of them felt they couldn't rationally talk about her.

When Maggie first came back to Melbourne, Pat. knew the hurt in P.J.'s eyes and could hear it in his voice. Pat knew what it felt like to lose someone that you loved. Although at least Maggie was still alive. But as she refused contact with P.J., she may as well have been a million miles away.

Maggie's attitude frustrated Pat. They had argued when she first came back. Pat was tired of telling P.J., when he rang, that she wasn't home when she was actually standing there. Listening to every word.

The argument was always the same. Pat had told her that P.J. loved her. She had always yelled back that there could be no future for them. Pat had explained, time and time again, that it wouldn't matter to P.J. and that he only wanted to be with her. The rest didn't matter. To which Maggie usually argued back to her father, that he was totally wrong, knew nothing, before stomping out the door, letting it slam as hard as she could.

Same old Maggie he always thought. Even when she was a child. If she didn't like what she was hearing, it wasâ€¦.. yell, yell, yell, stomp, slam!! She would never change.

"What are you smiling at?" asked P.J. He had been talking about Pat's football team not making the finals and he knew \*that\* wouldn't make him smile.

"Nah, sorry P.J. I was just rememberingâ€¦..â€¦.."

"Maggie?" he asked.

Pat nodded. "God she can be stubborn."

"Tell me about it!" laughed P.J. I wonder who she gets \*that\* from?"

"Alright, alright," Pat replied, "I know. Of all the traits she had to inherit from me."

"When are you going up there?" asked P.J.

"Ah, don't know. She said she would phone when she was settled in."

"Yeah, Paul, the Detective up there, said she had found somewhere to live."

"Yeah, she had me organise to get her stuff moved up there. Had it in storage with a few people. I had some stuff in the garage too. We got a removalist van to collect it all. I reckon she'd have a fair bit of unpacking to do."

Keep her busy for awhile," replied P.J.

"Why don't \*you\* go up there?" asked Pat. "You've got that young friend up there too. And you know a couple of people at the Station."

P.J. shook his head. "I don't think either of us are ready for that. I was invited by the guys at the Station to come up for Tom's retirement party, but I couldn't go."

"Couldn't or wouldn't?" questioned Pat.

P.J. smiled, he thought Pat. should have known the answer to that. "Well, I didn't want to face Maggie. I know that probably sounds irrational, I mean \*she\* was the one who just up and left \*me\* but I couldn't do that to her. She has to work there. It would have been awkward for both of us."

"She has to face things one day though," said Pat. "God knows I have tried to make her see reason. She can't keep running away."

"Well, I know that Pat," said P.J. "But she doesn't know that you told me why she left. She has to be the one to tell me. She has to face up to it herselfâ€|â€|â€|"

But she can't if you don't see her, can she?" interrupted Pat. He had decided a long time ago that they were as stubborn as each other.

"One day," was all P.J. said.

Pat could see that the subject was again closed.

The next night, P.J. had only been home ten minutes when the phone rang.

"Hello," he said, picking it up after the second ring.

"Hey P.J. how's it going?" came the reply.

"Ah good Kayla, I've just got in. Did you try earlier? I was caught up down at the club."

"I did," she replied. "How is it going at the club? I miss it."

"Fine, everything is fine. We just had a little bit of trouble, nothing major, but you know what it gets like. Must be a full moon tonight!" he joked.

"I think it is actually," replied Kayla, "that would explain it."

"Well, what's happening up there? You said you were talking work last night when I rang?" he asked.

"Yes I was. I am trying to get a Youth Club going again up here. We have had a rough week of it with the local hoodlums running amok, but we sorted them out I hope."

"We?" asked P.J.

"Yeah, the local Snr. Sgt. and I. We are also working on the Youth club submission together. I may be able to get the local cops involved with it. That's who was here last night when you rangâ€|â€|."

"Maggie? Maggie Doyle was \*THERE\* last night when I called???"

"Yeah," said Kayla, grinning to herself, "told you the company was female."

There was silence.

"Hey P.J. you still there?"

"Yeah, I'm here," he replied.

"Hell, you two are as \*bad\* as each other. I am glad I didn't ask \*Maggie\* to answer the phone for me."

"What do you mean, 'bad as each other'? What's been said?"

"Oh, nothing really," grinned Kayla. She loved teasing him.

"No you don't Kayla Darcy! Don't go saying something like that and not finish it." He replied.

"Or you will what?" teased Kayla cheekily, "come up here and give me a good talking to? Glad you're not \*my\* Dad!"

"Just consider yourself bloody luck that I'm not!" he laughed back. Although he didn't mind playing the father figure with Kayla, he actually enjoyed it. He figured it was the closest he would ever get to being a father, no matter how 'unlikely' the surrogate child turned out to be.

"Now," he continued, "what did she say?"

"P.J.," Kayla pleaded, "I told her I wouldn't tell you. Now you wouldn't want me to break a promise would you?"

"No, I guess not," he conceded. "So I will assume that something has been said, for you to promise not to tell me?"

"Assume all you like," Kayla replied, "I would tell you if I could P.J., honestly you know I would. I \*do\* know how you feel about her. You wear your heart on your sleeve when it comes to Maggie Doyle."

"I miss her something shocking some days," he replied soulfully.

"Well, I will say this much, and it is my own personal opinion, that she misses you too. There, I've said it. Happy now, that I have told you? But if you EVER tell her that I told you Patrick Joseph Hasham, I will be very, \*very\* annoyed."

"Hey, I won't tell," he said, "really. As if I am going to be talking to her anyway. But thank youâ€¦.. thank you for telling me. I really appreciate it."

"That's okay P.J., but look, I had better go," replied Kayla. "I've an early start in the morning, and I have some paperwork to finish before I go to bed."

"Okay, thanks for calling Kayla. You look after yourself, okay?" P.J. said.

"Yeah, yeah, sure 'Dad' as always. Keep out of trouble yourself." She answered cheekily.

"Trouble? Me, never," he said grinning. "Goodnight."

"Yeah, night." She said.

With that he heard the click at the other end. He hung up the phone.

P.J. went to bed that night with the words Kayla had said, tumbling around in his head. 'she misses you too'. It was all he had wanted to know. But where from here?

The End

End  
file.